Gathering the Gold

The Sigma Chi experience is much more than the chapter house. But the chapter house is an powerful component of the experience since it provides the stage where friendships are grown and the seeds of high minded values are sown. As with friendships and values, the chapter house requires care and renewal, all of which costs money...sometimes BIG money.

Every chapter house needs funds to renew, renovate and upgrade. Safety considerations drive the need for fire sprinkler systems, smoke alarms, up to code wiring, fire extinguishers and safe egress. Economic considerations dictate adequate insulation, energy efficient windows and efficient heating and cooling equipment. Recruitment considerations mandate an attractive and competitively priced housing alternative.

Weatherization and insulating work can sometimes be paid for through state grants or utility company rebates or subsidies. Search the internet for “weatherization programs” in your state for alternatives. Other types of renovation work generally require a private funding source. While private lenders may consider lending to a properly registered house corporation with adequate collateral and source of repayment, bank financing carries loan fees, high interest rates, short repayment terms and higher payments. By far, the best source of renovation funding is contributions from chapter alums.

Consider some statistics about fund raisers:

1. A 20-25% participation rate is very good. So, if you have 1,000 potential donors, you can expect only 200 to 250 contributions of any size. Do the math for your chapter.

2. 80% of all contributions will come from 20% of donors.

3. Your top 10 contributions typically make up 50% of the campaign goal.

4. The largest gift will be 15% of the campaign goal.

Being successful in gathering the gold requires a carefully executed plan which includes:

Defining the Donor Pool. Every house corporation should make having a complete and accurate alumni database a high priority. It is not only indispensable for raising money, it provides a mechanism for brothers to reconnect with other brothers. Sigma Chi Headquarters www.sigmachi.org can provide the information it has to begin the database building process. Since brothers move, databases are ever changing. This is especially true of many younger alumni who move frequently. Since the post office maintains change of address requests frequently. Since the post office maintains change of address requests typically make up 50% of the donor pool.

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Wield the Web. The vast majority of brothers have access to the internet and use email regularly. Use this fact to your advantage by hosting a chapter website. The cost is nominal and it’s accessible 24/7. Post your database, newsletters, pictures and more. And gather and use email addresses to reduce mailing costs.

Fund Raiser Theme. Every fund raiser should be named. The theme should be carefully chosen, visionary and appeal to the heart because the heart is the key to the wallet. An example includes “Giving Back” which appeals to repaying the debt owed to Sigma Chi for a lifetime of value.

How & When Funds Will Be Spent. Along with a theme goes the scheme. All fund raisers need to have a dollar goal based on specific renovation projects systematically accomplished according to a schedule. It’s okay to spread the work over several years if the projects are volunteer driven. If hiring a general contractor, most mid range renovations should be accomplished during the summer to avoid occupancy conflicts. If the work is more involved, temporary alternative housing for the chapter needs to be part of the plan.

A Picture is Worth (well, you know). Some alums may have not visited the chapter house for years, sometimes decades. A video on CD that shows the current condition and plans for renovation is very inexpensive to produce and distribute ($5-7 each when done in-house). The video can be also be distributed by email in MP4 format and posted to the chapter website or Facebook page created for a fund raiser. Focus first on fond memories and then segue into the renovation and money it will take to keep the dream alive for future brothers.

Identifying the Big Hitters. This pool is less than 5% of your total number of prospects but will yield the biggest dollars by far. Most of those who qualify will be in their fifties or older so having generational contacts who know who they are is vital. Once the Big Hitters have been identified, a personal visit is best even if that means long distance travel. Those Big Hitters that commit often know who the other Big Hitters are and may be willing to make personal calls to them. Don’t forget to ask.

Name Levels of Giving. Most contributors want to know where they stand in relation to their peers. Brothers are competitive that way. Establish at least five levels of giving that allow the Big Hitters to hit big (like $10,000 or $25,000 or more) but still allow smaller donors to play (like $100 and up). Name the categories for Sigma Chi symbols (Norman Shield, Jordan Standard, White Cross, etc.) or for chapter founders or achievers that are well known. Publish updated results on the chapter website and in newsletters.

When to Announce the Campaign. Keep the announcement under wraps until you have gotten commitments for at least half of the goal. This part is critical. If announced too soon, levels of giving and numbers of donors will be much smaller. When the campaign is announced with much of the goal already achieved and who committed it, others will be more inclined to contribute and match or out do their peers. Do not underestimate the power of this tactic. It is time tested and works.

Keeping the Ball Rolling. Once the campaign is announced, plan to communicate to the alums three or four times a year to show the progress and continued urgency to donate. A year end appeal in particular can be very effective since charitable giving deductions face a December 31 deadline.

Don’t Start Renovation Too Soon. Even though the announced schedule indicates the renovation work will start on such-and-such a date, delay the start if insufficient pledges have been received. Starting too soon is a message to those that haven’t contributed that you don’t need their money. Put the responsibility for the delay on those that haven’t pledged. Tell them “this train can’t leave the station without YOU on it”. Aside from the hard work and excitement that comes with a chapter house renovation, the rewards to those that participate cannot be understated. Fund raising and renovation projects give the house corporation board a series of positive long range goals to work on. As goals are accomplished, those that helped should be recognized for the effort in person and in public.

This is one of the best team building exercises there is. It gives others a desire to join a winning team. And it gives still other brothers a chance to show their financial appreciation for what Sigma Chi has meant to their lives. So, make plans to gather the gold that’s waiting there to be mined.

Grand Trustee Q&A

Q We pay our active chapter’s House Manager to assist the house corporation with repairs and coordinating contractors. Is that acceptable?

A It’s important for the house corporation to maintain a clear separation from active chapter for liability reasons. To that end, active members should not serve on the house corporation board nor should they be on the payroll. Likewise, the house corporation should not waive rent or pay fraternity dues on behalf of an active. Scholarships, on the other hand, are a permissible and well established method of accomplishing what you seek to do.

Q I attended the Grand Trustees’ House Corporation Officers Training Seminar (HCOTS) several years ago and found it extremely helpful. Besides useful information, I’m inspired to improve our house corp. Are there going to be other HCOTS?
Fostering a Culture of Safety and Responsibility

Risk Management Foundation Provides

- Educational Resources
- Risk Management Services
- Insurance Services
- Guidance for Undergraduates, Chapter Officers, House Corporations, and Alumni Advisors

Risk Management Foundation

www.rmfeducation.org Let Us Help You Today!

Sigma Chi Fraternity’s

CONSTANTINE CAPITAL INC.

Affordable financing options up to $250,000 for Sigma Chi house corporations that own chapter houses

- Chapter House Purchase
- Life & Fire Safety Upgrades
- New Construction
- Renovation

Ritual Regalia Loans up to $5000

For more information, contact Ed Rammrath erammrath@rammrathrealty.com Phone 832.483.8676
The Grand Trustees are developing a regional HCOTS concept that will offer two or more more geographically friendly locations. HCOTS is strongly and financially supported by our strategic partners Risk Management Foundation (RMF) and Constantine Capital, Inc. (CCI) which offer great programs and benefits to house corporations.

The HCOTS schedule will be communicated via email to all house corporation board members when available.

Alumni Engagement Report
Summer 2018

The Grand Trustees have met the goal of 120 Alumni Groups working their way toward being a more formal Alumni Chapter/Association.

Approximately 75% of the Active Chapters suspended in recent years did not have local alumni support. For this reason, Grand Consul Geddings asked that emphasis be placed on developing Alumni Groups in locations where there are Active Chapters. Having local and organized Alumni Groups can provide resources and guidance to Active Chapters that drift from Sigma Chi values.

In Fall 2018, more Alumni Groups will be forming as we reach out to Chapter Advisors, Grand Praetors and House Corporations to identify alums active in the chapter towns. In addition, we will develop alumni support for current and upcoming colony towns.

Social media sites have identified many Sigma Chi alums that are actively engaged but not formed into an Alumni Group. Alumni Groups can be listed in The Magazine of Sigma Chi that reaches 32,000 Life Loyal Sigs and attract more members to the Group.

The Grand Trustees encourage all alumni brothers to contact other Sigs to form an Alumni Group. You could, for example, form a group of your area chapter brothers, a business networking group or social group (sports, hiking, biking or other hobby).

For more Alumni Group resources, contact your Grand Trustee listed on Page One of The Sig House.

By Grand Trustee Bill Robinson

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By Grand Trustee Bill Robinson

Going Solar

The Epsilon Eta chapter of California State-Fresno now features a solar panel system paid with a $177,338 donation from a chapter alum.

The system is expected to provide electricity to the chapter house for 30 years and consists of 135 panels mounted above the parking lot. It is expected to generate 97% of the House’s annual $17,700 electricity charges. The savings will pay-off installation costs in about 10 years.

The system will provide shade, improved security lighting and include two electric vehicle charging stations.

It was dedicated on August 4, 2018 to Sigma Chi Steve Heinrichs who passed away in 2016.

CCI Corner

Constantine Capital Inc. (CCI) is Sigma Chi’s mortgage lender for qualified house corporations. It can finance a variety of renovation and upgrade projects up to $250,000 such as:

1. Chapter House Purchase
2. Life & Safety Upgrades
3. New Construction
4. Renovation Projects, and
5. Loan Guaranty

CCI’s current requests, approved or closed loans:

St. Thomas (closed) $60,000
Renovation
Fort Hays (request) $200,000
New house bridge loan

Does your house corporation have a chapter house financing needs? Contact Chair Ed Rammrath at Ph 832.483.8676 or erammrath@rammrathrealty.com

Sigma Chi’s Position on Alcohol

The conflict between each brother’s voluntary commitment to live according to the values and ideals of Sigma Chi versus his behavioral patterns relating to the misuse of alcohol.

How is the issue affecting today’s Greeks? The dangers of alcohol abuse have been well known for many years and have manifested themselves in tragic ways in the Greek-letter world. This has resulted not only in bad publicity for fraternities, but also in senseless deaths and permanent disabilities for individuals. Alcohol, directly and indirectly, has ruined many lives. It is the obligation of all Sigma Chis to recognize and to deal effectively with the real and potential problems caused when alcohol use becomes alcohol abuse.

The Fraternity recognizes that a number of chapters have benefited from an alcohol-free living environment and pledges its support and educational resources to a chapter, house corporation or university that chooses to implement such an environment.

Sigma Chi is a values-based organization with a desire to educate its members and prospective members in sound risk management policies and the legal, responsible use of, or abstinence from, alcohol. Prohibition, historically, has not been effective, and the Fraternity has no intention of mandating alcohol-free living. However, the Executive Committee will continue to have the right to impose alcohol-free housing stipulations as a disciplinary measure for chapters which flagrantly or repeatedly misuse alcohol.

Where does Sigma Chi stand? The misuse of alcohol is conduct unbecoming a Sigma Chi. Consequently, the Sigma Chi Fraternity resolves to eliminate the misuse of alcohol by its membership, particularly among undergraduate and prospective members.

The Fraternity has several policies regarding alcohol use and misuse, including:

The Sigma Chi Policy on Alcohol and Drugs
The Risk Management Foundation Policy on Alcohol and Drugs
Host college/university alcohol policies
Chapter bylaws

How is Sigma Chi addressing the issue? The Fraternity and Foundation have developed programs to assist undergraduate chapters in their alcohol education efforts and to foster true brotherhood. These include:

1. Crossroads values-based decision-making retreat
2. Province Conferences (RMF Case Studies)
3. Leadership Training Workshop
4. Individual chapter programs
5. Host institution programs

6. Interfraternal and other programs as applicable

However, the most difficult-yet essential-aspect of true brotherhood is accountability. If we truly trust our brothers, then we are obligated to be open and honest with them. Consequently, we may be the only ones who are able to hold each other accountable in a positive, brotherly manner, with pure motives, to help one another improve.

Accountability must begin with the man in the glass. We must hold ourselves first, then each other, accountable to live by the ideals and values to which we each voluntarily committed. This includes holding ourselves and each other accountable if we misuse alcohol.

The primary structured accountability mechanism must be the individual chapter judicial board. Remembering that the actions of any one brother reflect on all of us, and that just one incident may affect the future of the chapter, the chapter judicial board must act promptly and fairly when brothers misuse alcohol. The courses of action that should be considered alone or in combination include:

1. Mandating counseling if there has been a pattern of misuse (most colleges/universities offer such services to their students at no additional charge)

2. Suspending social and/or other chapter privileges for a minimum of one semester (or its equivalent) along with financial remuneration for any damage

The second structured accountability mechanism must be local alumni, specifically the chapter advisor and his advisory committee from an operations perspective, and the members of the house corporation as the chapter’s landlord or property manager. Possible courses of action could include:

1. Counseling (as noted for chapter judicial board)

2. Soliciting parental/guardian intervention and support

3. Evicting from the chapter house those deemed to be undesirable tenants

4. Building or remodeling houses without barrooms (prevention)

Both the individual chapter judicial board and the local alumni should utilize the Grand Praetor, the Fraternity’s official representative in the province, as a resource for these deliberations and proceedings. IHSV

We’re Here to Help

Board of Grand Trustees is here to assist Sigma Chi house corporations in a myriad of ways. Besides many years of service to Sigma Chi in various capacities such as real estate development, property management, project administration, politics, house maintenance and renovation, insurance, tax planning, accounting, construction, fund raising, legal, education, financing, risk management and more.

While each Grand Trustee is assigned specific provinces to oversee, this combined expertise is available to all house corporations. The key to tapping this gold mine is to contact your province’s Grand Trustee with a specific request for assistance. If your request is out of your Grand Trustee’s specific area of expertise, other colleagues will assist in providing real solutions. Give us a try. IHSV

House Corporation Resource Directory

ARCHITECTURAL & PLANNING SERVICES
Aynesworth Architects & Consultants  512.328.2212
G. Tim Aynesworth
PO Box 161434, Austin TX 78716  www.aynesworth.com

Hug & Associates, LLC  678.297.2929
Mike Hug mhug@HugArchitects.com
5290 Avalon Blvd
Alpharetta GA 30009  www.HugArchitects.com
Specializing in the design and renovation of fraternity housing.

Reifsteck Reid & Company Architects  217.351.4100
Rod Reid reid@rr-arch.com
Chapters house renovation and construction design; collects data, analyzes project requirements, develops cost estimates; assists locating design and construction team members.

CHAPTER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
Pierce Education Properties, L.P.  619.297.0400
Matt Marcuccia, VP for Acquisitions  www.PierceEducationProperties.com
National developers, buyers, owners and operators of student housing with significant expertise in Greek Housing acquisition, disposition, development, finance, etc.

CHAPTER HOUSING FINANCING
Constantine Capital, Inc.  832.483.8676
Ed Rammrath erammrath@rammrathrealty.com
Affordable financing to Sigma Chi house corporations for chapter house purchase, life & safety upgrades, new construction, renovation and loan guaranty.

CHAPTER HOUSE RENOVATION & DESIGN
LAUNCH Interior Design  916.660.9856
David Lemberger  www.launchnetstream.net  www.launchinteriordesign.com
New construction and renovation for cost effective and efficient design selections including paint colors, furniture, lighting, window & floor coverings and more.

FINANCIAL & DATABASE MANAGEMENT
GreekBill, Inc.  www.greekbill.com  800.457.3816
Web-based budgeting and financial management service enables billing, collecting, budgeting, reporting, online payment options.

OmegaFi  www.omegafi.com  800.276.6342
Chapter and alumni management tools to bill and collect rent, manage rosters and records, pay bills and employees and file tax returns.

FOOD SERVICES
CampusCooks  847.309.1859
William Reeder wreeder@campuscooks.com
Comprehensive program: on-site cook plus management of staffing, payroll, food and supply ordering, menu preparation.  www.campuscooks.com

College Chefs
Jordan Wighton jwighton@collegechefs.com  217.369.7267
www.collegechefs.com  We provide trained professional chefs to prepare delicious meals and maintain a spotless kitchen.

Culinary Consultants Purchasing Services
Stan Faulkner Support@infocps.com  314.422.3407
Brian Heider  www.infocps.com  847.566.7533
National buying program exclusively for fraternity chapters with food programs. Instant cost savings with no major changes to existing food program.

Gill Grilling
Brian Gill brian@gillgrilling.com
www.gillgrilling.com
Equipment consultation & purchasing, Nutritional analysis, payroll, custom menus. Serving Maryland, Massachusetts & Alabama.

Greek Kitchen Management
622.428.0496
Amy Poklinkoski amy@greekkitchenmanagement.com
Greekkitchenmanagement.com
Kitchen management company specializing in staffing, high quality food preparation, food allergy accommodations and exceptional customer service.

FLOORING
The Carpet Company  541.484.5372
Daryl Egbert
daryl@thecarpetcompany.biz
All major brands of commercial and residential flooring.

FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATION
Affinity Connection  814.237.0481 ext.131
Greg Woodman greg@affinityconnection.com
www.affinityconnection.com
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Member Planet
888.298.8845
Patrick Terrian
C 310.590.4413
pterrian@memberplanet.com
www.memberplanet.com
Email newsletters and text messaging, chapter websites, member database, donation sites.

Pennington & Associates
875.843.1661
Patrick Anderdice
paiderdice@penningtonco.com
www.penningtonco.com
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The Laurus Group
770.903.3987
Bill Paris bparis@thelaurusgroup.net
C 404.441.9630
www.thelaurusgroup.net
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dave@tejon.com
www.tejon.com
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Tampa University
617.424.0076
www.tampaUniversity.com
Greek Bill, Inc.  www.greekbill.com
Specializing in the design and renovation of fraternity housing.

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Affinity Connection  814.237.0481 ext.131
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